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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Friday, November 2, 1934.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Iron Menus." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

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The scientists who deal in deep figures say that every normal person should take in fifteen milligrams of iron every day -- should have three meals that include this much iron. And, the scientists will explain that fifteen milligrams is the same as one two-thousandth of an ounce of iron.

That ought to be easy. Surely almost any sort of meal would contain that much iron. But as a matter of fact, it isn't so easy. Iron occurs in most foods, to be sure -- some iron. But in many foods you get only fractions of a milligram of iron to the ordinary serving. You really can't depend on any one food in the quantity you would normally eat of it at a meal to give you your iron quota. For example, take baked beans. Now baked beans happen to be one of our cheapest foods as well as one of the richest sources of iron. But to get your fifteen milligrams -- your day's quota of iron, you would have to eat more than a pound of baked beans. And even an old-time New Englander would find that a hard job. Spinach is another iron-rich food, and egg yolk and lean beef are still others. But to get your day's iron supply, you would have to eat 2 and 1/2 cups of cooked spinach, a dozen or more egg yolks, or more than a pound of lean beef.

So that brings up a problem for every mother of a family. How is she to make sure that the meals she plans are furnishing enough iron for her family? It's important, too -- this iron problem, for iron is a blood builder and a certain amount of it is absolutely essential to good health.

The food experts say that the best way to solve this problem is to plan meals so that you can get iron from several different foods, so that the total from here and there will supply you with enough. And that's another way of saying that you will get enough iron if you have an all-round good diet in other respects. The iron problem, like the general food problem, is just a question of providing the necessary variety of foods within your limits of cost.

Meats, eggs, some vegetables, some fruits, some cereals and some sweets are the good sources of iron -- enough different kinds of food to provide a very good choice. But some meats happen to contain more iron than others, and that's what every meal planner needs to understand. The very best of all food sources of iron are the liver, kidneys, brain and heart of meat animals. The lean muscle of beef, veal, lamb, pork, and the dark meat of poultry are very good also. So

are egg yolks. So are oysters and shrimps. But not even these foods that stand at the top of the list in iron content will furnish you, in the usual serving, with the iron you need for the day. You still must pick up more here and there in several other kinds of food.

And that brings you first to greens -- particularly turnip greens and beet tops, chard, dandelion, and mustard greens, watercress and spinach, also kale. In fact, any thin green leaf is a rich source of iron.

Then, whole-grain flours and cereals also furnish iron, particularly whole wheat, barley, rye and oats. But white flour and other refined cereals contain barely a trace. Beans and peas, fresh or dried, are rich in iron, and the best of these are limas, lentils, common or kidney beans, cowpeas and common peas.

Let's not forget the dried fruits. They also furnish iron, particularly apricots and peaches, currants and dates, figs, prunes and raisins.

If you are planning a very low cost diet for your family, a "rock-bottom diet," so to speak, you'll include a good deal of whole-wheat bread, whole-grain cereal and oatmeal as well as plenty of white bread. But if you can afford to spend a little more for food and can have plenty of green vegetables and meats day in and day out, you'll probably include less of the cereals. The breadstuffs and cereals are energy foods, and because they must be plentiful in low-cost meals, the thrifty thing to do is to make them count for all they are worth in other ways too. Since the whole grains are good sources of iron, one of the cheapest ways to build up the iron content of your meals is to use plenty of whole grain cereals, dark flours, and dark breads. And then keep in mind, when you want sweets, that dates and figs and raisins are rich in iron. And because of that iron, they may be a better choice in sweets for you than ordinary candy -- candy that contains simply sugar, flavoring and coloring, and maybe some fat.

Well, that brings us to the iron dinner menu we're going to plan today. For the main dish let's have Braised liver with tomatoes; Baked potatoes; Graham muffins; Turnip greens; Stewed figs and raisins; Oatmeal cookies.

That reminds me of a good oatmeal drop-cookie recipe for you. Twelve ingredients:

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup fat,	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup milk,
1 cup sugar,	$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon soda dissolved in
1 egg,	1 teaspoon water,
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups sifted flour,	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups fine oatmeal,
$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt,	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped nuts, and
2 teaspoons cinnamon,	1 cup seedless raisins.

I'll repeat those ingredients again. (REPEAT)

Cream the fat and sugar, and add the beaten egg. Sift together the dry ingredients, except the oatmeal, and add with the milk to the first mixture. Add the soda and water, and then the oatmeal, nuts, and raisins. Mix well. Drop by spoonfuls onto a greased baking sheet and bake to a golden brown in a moderately hot oven (375 to 400 degrees F.). Remove from the pan while hot.

